

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9591

S E C R E T YAOUNDE 3367

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AF ONLY

AF/C FOR BLODGETT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, MASS, CM

SUBJ: CAMEROON MILITARY EQUIPMENT LIST

REF: YAOUNDE 3328 AND PREVIOUS.

1. SEPT 10 1700 LOCAL FINALLY RESUMED CONVERSATION WITH ASST. SEC GEN PRESIDENCY BELLO BOUBA AND LT. COL. OUSMANOU DAOUDA, CHIEF OF PRESIDENT AHIDJO'S MILITARY CABINET.
 2. ONE REFINEMENT MADE TO POINTS COVERED REFTEL AND THAT IS THAT GURC CONSIDERS BORDER PROBLEMS WITH GABON SETTLED AND THOSE WITH CONGO UNDER CONTROL. ALTHOUGH GURC WORRIED ABOUT SOVIET ARMS DELIVERIES AND BORDER PROBLEMS MAKE THEM NERVOUS THEY WISH CONTINUE PROJECT IMAGE PEACE LOVING COUNTRY WHICH ENJOYS GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALL NEIGHBORS.
 3. AFTER LONG DISCUSSION ON NECESSITY MAKE STRONGEST JUSTIFICATION POSSIBLE FOR SAPRC MEETING, LIST ORIGINALLY SUBMITTED HAS BEEN REDUCED TO WHAT GURC CONSIDERS ITS MINIMUM NEEDS MEET INCREASED THREAT FROM SOVIET SUPPLIED NEIGHBORS. REQUESTS LISTED IN FOLLOWING ORDER OF PRIORITY:
 - A) 20,000 M-16 RIFLES
 - B) 30 CADILLAC GAGE VC 150 COMMANDO CARS
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- C) TWO RADAR PICKET SEAWARD DEFENSE BOATS.

4. M-16 RIFLES: PRESENTLY GURC HAS MIXTURE FRENCH, ENGLISH AND BELGIAN WEAPONS. TWENTY THOUSAND RIFLES REQUIRED IN ORDER PROVIDE SUFFICIENT WEAPONS FOR INTERVENTION FORCE, PRESIDENTIAL GUARD, AIR FORCE, NAVY, RESERVES, POLICE, AS WELL AS FOR OTHER ARMY UNITS AND GENDARMARIE. WITH OBJECTIVE OF STANDARDIZATION GURC WISHES HAVE ALL FORCES EQUIPPED WITH SAME WEAPON. THIS WILL ENABLE IT TO IMPROVE THEIR CAPABILITY TO MEET THREATS OF AGGRESSION FROM ANY DIRECTION AND PERMIT COMPLETE INTERCHANGABILITY OF WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION. IT WOULD ALSO PERMIT ARMORIES COMMON TO ALL SERVICES. THUS, ROUTINE MOVEMENTS OF TROOPS COULD AVOID HAVING CARRY RIFLES WITH THEM, SINCE SAME MODEL WOULD BE AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT COUNTRY.

5. 30 VC 150 COMMANDO CARS: GURC HAS ALREADY PURCHASED A NUMBER OF THESE VEHICLES COMMERCIALY FROM UNITED STATES. HOWEVER, THEY HAVE HAD TO ACQUIRE WEAPONS SYSTEMS SEPARATELY. THEY ARE VERY IMPRESSED WITH THEIR PERFORMANCE AND WOULD LIKE TO HAVE 18 WITH 30 AND 50 MM MACHINE GUNS AND 90 MM CANNON; 10 WITH SAME MACHINE GUNS, BUT 20 MM "BITUBE," AND TWO FOR COMMAND CARS. MOST OF THEIR PRESENT VEHICLES ARE TIED DOWN AROUND MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS. ADDITIONAL VEHICLES WOULD PERMIT THE GURC TO DISPERSE THEM CLOSER TO BORDER AREAS SO THAT THEY COULD BE NEAR SITE OF TROUBLE IN TIME OF NEED.

3. RADAR PICKET SEAWARD DEFENSE BOATS. THIS IS WHAT WAS MEANT BY SEMAPHORES IN ORIGINAL REQUEST. LACKING JANE'S FIGHTING SHIPS, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE PIN THIS REQUEST TO AN EXACT TYPE OF U.S. NAVAL CRAFT. HOWEVER, WHAT IS WANTED ARE TWO SHIPS WHICH COULD SERVE AS EARLY WARNING NETWORK FOR ANY HOSTILE SHIPS OR PLANES IN AREA AND THEREBY ALERT OTHER FORCES OF DANGER.

4. WHILE ESSENTIALLY FEELING THAT MUCH MORE EQUIPMENT IS REQUIRED TO MEET WHAT IS THE PERCEIVED POTENTIAL THREAT FROM ITS MORE RADICAL NEIGHBORS WHO ARE RECEIVING NUMERICALLY AND SUPERIOR SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS FROM SOVIETS, THE GURC BELIEVES THAT USG FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION OF THIS PARED DOWN LIST WOULD GO A LONG WAY IN HELPING TO OVERCOME THE MORE OBVIOUS DEFICIENCIES

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IN ITS DEFENSE FORCES: A) LACK OF SMALL ARMS STANDARDIZATION; B) LACK OF MOBILITY TO MEET BORDER THREATS AND C) LACK OF ADEQUATE WARNING SYSTEM FOR ATTACKS FROM SEA AND AIR.

5. WHILE THE QUESTION OF PAYMENT HAS NOT BEEN DEFINED, IT IS CLEAR FROM CONTEXT THAT GURC REQUEST IS FOR GIFT OR ON LONG-TERM LOAN BASIS.
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